



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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CIACPAS NID 85-262JX

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National Intelligence Daily

Saturday
9 November 1985

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: DEC 2003

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CPAS NID 85-262JX
9 November 1985

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Contents



Guatemala: Runoff Election Scheduled 7



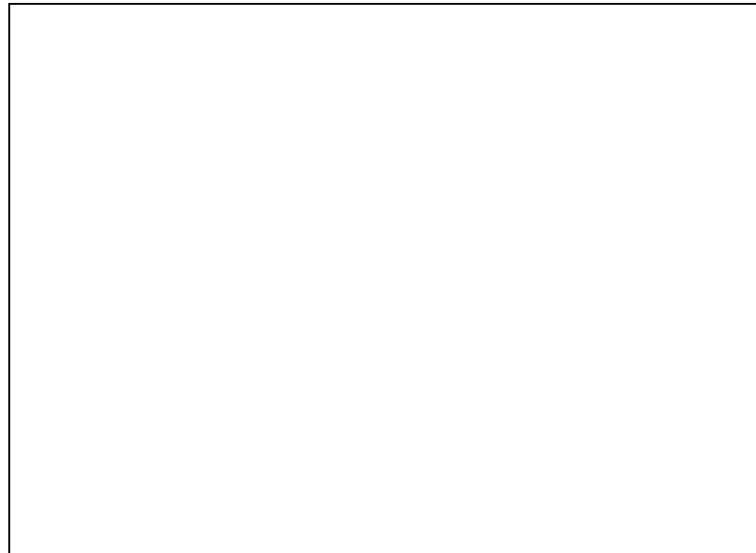
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9 November 1985

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GUATEMALA: Runoff Election Scheduled

Presidential candidates of the two major centrist parties, which dominated the elections last Sunday, are preparing for a runoff on 8 December. Vincio Cerezo of the center-left Christian Democratic Party won 39 percent of the vote, while Jorge Carpio of the National Centrist Union received 20 percent. [redacted] preliminary results from the district races indicate the Christian Democrats are heading toward a majority in the congress. [redacted]

Comment: The smooth handling of the first round strengthens chances for a successful runoff, which will be preceded by political horsetrading as the two front-runners scramble for support from the losers. Cerezo probably will gain the backing of the other centrist parties. Meanwhile, the poor showing of rightist parties underscores the decline in their popularity since the Constituent Assembly elections last July. [redacted]

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